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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

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Title: I have diabetes and I deserve a chance

It's good to see that there is finally an effort being made to change the rules regarding Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL). The total ban of people with Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus (ITDM) operating a commercial motor vehicle is grossly unfair and blatantly discriminatory. While I do agree that there are people who should not operate a commercial vehicle, having ITDM is not a reason to automatically add someone to this group. Every individual should be judged on how well he or she controls the impact the disease has on his or her life. A disability is only a disability when the person afflicted lets it become just that. I actively choose to not let ITDM control me. With five and a half years of tests and medical records proving I have excellent control of my ITDM, I believe I've earned the right to be judged as an individual rather than discriminated against as part of a group.

After reviewing the proposed rule changes and application procedures, it is encouraging to me because I know I can meet almost all the requirements set forth in it. However, the only requirement I cannot meet is "operating a commercial motor vehicle, with a diabetic condition controlled by the use of insulin, for the three-year period immediately preceding application (for an exemption)." I live in one of the 46 states where this is still illegal. I cannot drive commercially while using insulin until a program such as this is in place. This "three-year rule" will make this whole program virtually useless to those of us who are qualified to benefit from it.

As a Lab Pack Chemist, my job is to identify, segregate, and pack hazardous chemicals in accordance with the standards set by the E.P.A., R.C.R.A., the D.O.T., and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. I also prepare all the necessary manifests and documentation to get this to our treatment facility. I do not get paid as much as other employees simply because I cannot transport the hazardous waste back to our facility. The amount of work performed by our division is restricted because a person with a CDL must chauffeur me to and from job sites. If I could drive commercially, the other driver would be free to do other work elsewhere. I believe it's also unfair when another Lab Pack Chemist is sent to pack

chemicals with me. He must share the workload on site as well as do all of the driving. We could share the driving duties if I could drive commercially.

I was hired by my current employer because of my vast chemical knowledge and my ability to deal with problems that occur while performing work tasks. I was almost not hired because of my lack of a valid CDI.. I have to work harder than my co-workers to constantly prove that I am just as valuable as they are to the success of our company. I also work very hard at staying in shape, watching what I eat, and keeping my ITDM under strict control. With an exemption program like this (without the three-year rule) I can concentrate more on managing my diabetes and less on measuring up to my fellow employees.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert L. Pflugler, Jr.